

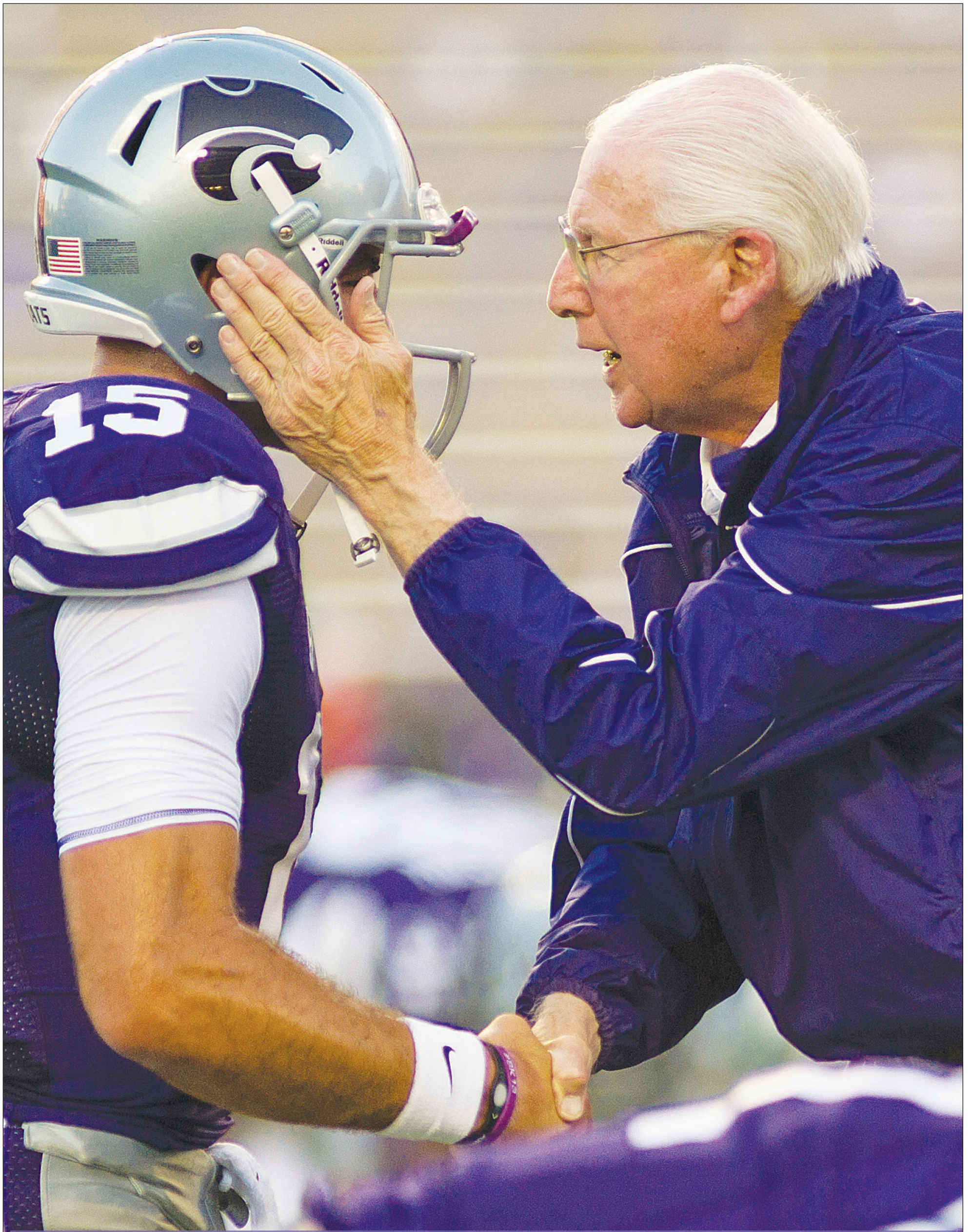


thursday, september 18, 2014

Bill Snyder Family Stadium @ 6:30 p.m.
NO. 20 K-STATE VS NO. 5 AUBURN

the**collegian**

GAMEDAY GUIDE



“The opportunity for the **greatest turnaround in college football** exists here today and it's not one to be taken lightly.”

EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State quarterback **Jake Waters** (left) listens to **Bill Snyder's** words of advice before kickoff against North Dakota State Aug. 30, 2013 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

POWER CAT

PROFILE

CHARLES JONES

By TATE STEINLAGE
THE COLLEGIAN

If you happen to run into Charles Jones around campus, chances are he'll have a big smile on his face.

Simply put, the sophomore running back out of Mandeville, Louisiana loves football. He rushed for 1,767 yards and 22 touchdowns in his final high school season. That same year, the Louisiana Sports Writers Association named him honorable mention all-state. Jones was a passionate, go-to starter for three years.

When he arrived at K-State, Jones had to do what so many others in the football program have had to do: be patient. Jones stood on the sidelines for two years, in 2012 as a redshirt and last season as a backup to all-Big 12 honorable mention John Hubert.

This season, Jones is finally a major asset to the K-State offense as one of two main options at running back. In just two games, he's already rushed for 130 yards and four touchdowns on 21 carries.

Jones is back to playing football competitively, which means he's back to doing what he loves.

"It's a lot of fun to me," Jones said. "It's a lot of fun getting on the field and having the success that we are having. I'm having the time of my life right now, if I'm being honest."

Jones' cheerful personality is present on and off the field — in the huddle and in the classroom — something that wasn't as evident when he was a newcomer and understudy.

"I can tell a difference in charisma about him," senior quarterback Jake Waters said. "He's just so excited to be out there playing with us. He gives 100 percent every single day whether it's blocking, running the ball or catching. As a quarterback, when I see a guy giving a 100 percent blocking for me, that makes me try and do that much better



Sophomore running back **Charles Jones** rushes away from defenders on Aug. 30, 2014 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

GEORGE WALKER | THE COLLEGIAN

for him."

Like his quarterback, Jones' biggest hurdle was time. Learning an entirely new system isn't easy for a young player — which line-backer to pick up, what hole to cutback to, where and when to cut on a route.

"Kind of like me, once he grasped the offense he calmed down and just played, instead of thinking about every little thing," Waters said. "I've seen him from spring ball to now, it's just night and day for

him — knowing how to set up his blocks better, what kind of runs he likes and how the offense line is going to block certain runs. It definitely helps."

Once the playbook became his best friend rather than his biggest enemy, Jones progressed.

Though it's only been two games, Jones has grown tremendously, according to his teammates.

"I think he plays with a lot of confidence (now)," red-

shirt sophomore wide receiver Deante Burton said. "After he got that first game out the way, that first big run, he turned up his confidence. That's something you have to have in a running back — someone who believes in himself — and I know all the other guys on the field believe in him. I'm just really proud of him and the way he's playing."

Jones attributes his success mainly to what some call the "K-State Way:" red-shirting and contributing as a

scout team player, among other things.

"Just staying in the film room and watching the people ahead of me," Jones said. "I've watched John (Hubert) and old film of (Daniel Thomas) and Daniel Sams. I've been patient and have taken advantage of the opportunity I had when they threw me in with the ones."

There's much more to Jones, his personality and his knowledge of the game of football. But what's important

is that he's happy.

Jones is loving the game that has always loved him right back.

"When you're having success like he has been having — he has been running the ball great — it's obviously fun," Waters said. "He's being worry free, but also cognizant of being assignment sound. Being able to just go out and play and know that he has the ability to do some special things is definitely helping him out."

ESPN, FOX Sports analysts discuss K-State's history and season

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

Joel Klatt remembers exactly what it was like to step into Manhattan, Kansas.

As the starting quarterback at Colorado in 2003, he made his first road start at K-State. Now serving as a FOX Sports college football analyst, his opinions haven't changed.

"Loud," Klatt said of the environment. "We played there in '03 and in '05 and obviously the 2003 Kansas State team was very good as they went on to win the Big 12 title. They beat us and they were as tough and as physical as a team that I can remember playing."

Despite being several years removed from his playing career, his perspective of Bill Snyder's program hasn't changed.

"There are inherent challenges at Kansas State," Klatt said. "There's not a real strong recruiting base, it's tough to

get to among other things. Bill Snyder has turned it into one of the preeminent programs in the Big 12 and in the country and he's done it twice. The amount of respect I have for him is through the roof."

ESPN college football analyst Jesse Palmer first visited K-State on Oct. 7, 2010 for its game against Nebraska. The environment made a strong impression on the former Florida quarterback.

"It's not as big as a lot of stadiums we see, but you wouldn't know that by the crowd," Palmer said. "It's a pretty hardcore environment. It's very loud, it's raucous and it's kind of the epitome of home-field advantage with the hostile environment."

Palmer never had an opportunity to face Snyder and company in his playing career in Gainesville, but it didn't affect the admiration he has for the longtime head coach.

"To me, it's his attention to detail," Palmer said. "It's the simple things that I think a lot of other teams overlook.

His pyramid and principles have always been playing smart football, no penalties, playing great special teams and not turning the ball over. Every coach says that, but I don't know how many ultimately live it all the time. That's one thing that he does and it has shown up throughout his entire career here."

Under Bill Snyder, K-State's list of marquee non-conference wins is long. The 74-year-old has defeated USC twice, Miami twice, Nebraska five times and Oklahoma six times.

"If you go back in those games, it's going to be a common theme," ESPN college football analyst David Pollock said. "It's going to be the kicking game, winning the turnover battle. It sounds really basic and really stupid, but it's how you win games. It's a blueprint that they use and if they're going to beat Auburn, it's going to be time of possession."

Auburn, who's coming off of a national championship

berth and 11-2 season, returns with a number of key contributors including starting quarterback and Heisman candidate Nick Marshall.

The senior leads a Tiger offense that ranks No. 5 in the country with an average of 52 points per game.

Three of the stronger pieces to the national championship run are gone in first-round draft picks Greg Robinson (St. Louis), Dee Ford (Kansas City) as well as third-rounder Tre Mason (St. Louis).

Palmer says he's anticipating how some of the newest Auburn starters will handle their first road trip tonight.

"This is the first time this year that they're going to see this and you don't know how they're going to respond," Palmer said. "You can put as much crowd noise as you want through practice week, but ultimately when you get out on national television in this type of environment, with this crowd, it can be very different. There is a bit of unknown for (Auburn head coach) Gus

Malzahn in respect to how his guys will respond."

Klatt believes K-State holds the recipe to handle Malzahn's diverse and talented offense.

"In order to play quality defense against what Gus Malzahn does, it's like the old option offense," Klatt said. "You hear the word discipline come up. You have to play assignment football on the defensive side, you have to line up correctly and you have to tackle in space. If I were to define Kansas State's defense from when I played and all the way to what they play now, they line up correctly, they play disciplined defense, they know their job and they tackle well in space, so Auburn is going to have as tough as time as they've had against anybody in trying to run the football."

Win or loss, Palmer says opponents better be ready for a physical game when facing Snyder's teams.

"You know if you're playing these guys, bring big-boy pads because it's going to be

a knockdown, drag out fight," Palmer said. "You might win the game, but if you do, you're going to be in an ice tub after the game. That's kind of a staple for them."

Across the board, K-State appears to be much more prepared for its return game on the Thursday night telecast and it's one that Palmer is eagerly anticipating.

"For a game of this magnitude, this one we all circled at the start of the year knowing how big of a non-conference game it was," Palmer said. "We were also anticipating the kind of environment it's going to be."

Klatt says it's one of his favorite matchups of the season and is prepared for four quarters of two well-prepared teams.

"Talent wise, Kansas State will be overmatched a little bit," Klatt said. "But because of the fact that they play such disciplined football, I would be shocked if Kansas State isn't in the game late with a chance to win."

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Bill Snyder: A seized opportunity

By TATE STEINLAGE
THE COLLEGIAN

The system didn't plan for this, Bill Snyder did.

A program once labeled "Futility U" by Sports Illustrated was never meant step into national prominence. The product on the field was hapless, the support in the stands dejected. However, nestled inside the Vanier Football Complex just outside the stadium that now bears his name, Snyder knew K-State football was approaching a critical turning point.

"The opportunity for the greatest turnaround in college football exists here today, and it's not one to be taken lightly," a much younger Snyder said at his K-State introduction in 1988.

Little did anyone know sitting in that press conference or reading the papers afterwards, Snyder would deliver on that statement.

In his 25 years in the Little Apple, Snyder has coached, retired and coached some more. He's led K-State to a 180-90-1 record, two Big 12 Championships and seven bowl victories.

The 74-year-old has become the face of Wildcat football.

All of Snyder's accolades are of value, providing context for where this program has come from and where it's going. But the respect that comes with it all is what truly carries weight, presently and when Snyder's storied career is concluded.

"I don't know why you'd limit (respect for Snyder) to the Big 12, quite honestly," Baylor head coach Art Briles said. "It's a national respect and appreciation. The guy is a genius. Name the head coaches coaching today that, when they walk out on the field, it's their backyard. That speaks for itself."

That sentiment is not only shared among coaching veterans such as Briles, who may better relate to Snyder's practices, but also newcomers like Texas Tech head coach Kliff Kingsbury — the second-youngest head coach in college football.

"He's pretty legendary for what he's done out there, recruiting, coaching and every aspect of it," Kingsbury said. "I have such a tremendous amount of respect for that man and what he's done. I still don't think he gets the credit he deserves for the wins; he gets out there and what he's done."

The formula for success under Snyder is as simple as it is absurd in the context of what college football is today. Five-star players are typically a dream, as are four. Three-star talent is touted in these parts, and two-star is expected — if you're even starred at all, of course.

Here, junior colleges are the pipeline. Redshirting is the process. The system goes against everything analysts, athletic directors and fans say that is needed to produce a successful team. But it works.

"That star system, whatever it represents, I don't know," Snyder said. "I don't think, and I may be wrong about this, but I don't think it really is indicative of the quality of character



K-State quarterback **Jake Waters** (left) listens to **Bill Snyder's** (right) words of advice before kickoff against North Dakota State Aug. 30, 2013 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

and the kind of value system — intrinsic values — that are so significant in being able to exploit your capabilities over a period of time. That's what is important to me. Ryan Mueller, when he came into our program, to me he's a five-star guy. That doesn't necessarily mean that he was a better athlete than some of the other guys that had five stars, or a guy that had four stars or three stars or whatever the case is. What it tells me is that he has the capacity, because of his value system, to become that kind of a player."

TCU head coach Gary Patterson, who played and assisted at K-State from 1980-82, said he believes it's a system that players can easily resonate with.

"To me, it's about like a feeder system up there for Snyder," Patterson said. "If you know all the rules, any kid in the state of Kansas can get into school at K-State and play. He's done a fantastic job at growing them up. What he's done with the walk-on program — Jordy (Nelson), even Ryan Mueller started as a walk on — it's great. Kansas kids play a lot of sports and so giving them a chance to develop shows what kind of program he has up there."

Giving players a chance is only part of the equation, though, according to former K-State quarterback and current assistant coach Collin Klein.

"He truly cares," Klein said. "He asks and requires that of all his players truly care, give your best and get better every day. It doesn't matter where you start,

it's where you finish. A lot of us, myself included, were not highly recruited out of high school, so you buy into that model of daily improvement. To coach's credit and our staff's credit, over the years they've been able to identify that and nurture and grow that potential in players. The environment here is special."

What was an opportunity in 1988 is now a reality in 2014. Today, the stands are packed with purple and overflowing with pride. On the field, K-State football annually exceeds expectations, playing as a unified family out to prove naysayers wrong.

Standing under it all is the same man who's continued to

deliver from day one — Snyder.

"When Bill Snyder walks in, if you don't turn and listen, then that's your fault," Briles said. "That means you have a problem because the man knows what he's doing. He's been doing it for as long as anybody over the last 50 years. It's pretty phenomenal."

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the collegian

Special teams: one of many blueprints for K-State's long-term success

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

It has been 14 years since David Allen stepped foot onto the turf of Bill Snyder Family Stadium as player, but his memories of playing at K-State have not diminished.

The Liberty, Missouri native's name is etched in several special teams record books, including a notable entry as the first punt returner in NCAA history to return punts for touchdowns in three consecutive weeks.

However, Allen doesn't sit alone. The depth, richness and prestige K-State holds in this area circles a list of names that runs through every season of head coach Bill Snyder's tenure in Manhattan.

For the K-State overall punt-return yardage record holder, it's what makes the memories extra special.

"I take great pride in it," Allen said. "To be called one of the best at anything is an honor. For me, I've always said this and I'll continue to say this whenever the question is asked, but the guys that were out there and blocked for me, I give them all the credit. My job was easy, catch the ball and run. Those were the guys who busted their butts and they enjoyed it. It was one of those things where they fought tooth and nail just like an offensive or defensive player to be out there and make something happen."

Right behind No. 32 in the record books sits Aaron Lockett, brother of former K-State receiver Kevin Lockett and uncle to current receiver Tyler Lockett.

"Whether it's a touchdown, long catch, or a big block, you want to get on the field and make a difference," Lockett explained. "As a returner, you have to have the mindset that I'm going to make a difference and I'm going to make a difference. You get plenty of opportunities as a returner. As a receiver, hopefully your number is called and you're able to make a difference. You've got to have it in you and you've got to have that will to go get it."

Knowing head coach Bill Snyder's emphasis on special teams provides an even greater joy for Lockett.

"It's something I always hold close to my heart," Lockett, who sits just ahead of his nephew in receiving yards in third place, said. "If you have an opportunity to go out there and be a part of special teams



KELLY GLASSCOCK | 2001 ROYAL PURPLE
Junior **Aaron Lockett** leaps for a catch against the University of Colorado Buffaloes. The Cats beat the Buffs 44-21 in Boulder, Colorado. Sept. 30, 2000.

and make a difference, that's something you should hold close to you, because he does choose 11 special players that can go out there and make it happen. A lot of tradition goes into it and a lot of pride. It's something people want to be a part of."

Jon Fabris, K-State's special teams coach for the 1997 and 1998 seasons, said Snyder's analysis and preparation for the game makes him one of the game's greatest to walk the sidelines in college football.

"We'd go into games and we were so prepared," Fabris said. "We were so prepared and everyone knew what they were doing and what they were in

charge of. I always thought we felt like we had an advantage because of who our head coach is. I always thought we were in the game and he's as good as there has ever been."

History doesn't end at K-State in terms of kickoff and punt return yards. In fact, former K-State kicker Martín Gramática still sits in the No. 1 spot for the NCAA's longest field goal (65 yards) without a tee.

Similar to Lockett, playing for a coach and system that benefits the often thought of third component of a football game was intriguing for the former NFL kicker.

"To show the importance

they put on special teams, they recruit a scholarship kicker and punter," Gramática said. "Some places they might say we'll go on with a walk-on guy or try to recruit someone from their soccer team and that's going to work. Coach Snyder with the help of (associate head coach and special teams coach) Sean Snyder, they played a huge role into what I was able to accomplish and to be able to play in the NFL."

In Snyder's mind, it doesn't matter if it's his son or any other of his assistants, special teams will always take value in preparing units all across the field.

"All of our coaches have

a teaching responsibility in regard to special teams," Snyder said. "First and foremost, I want everyone invested in it because I want everyone to realize the significance of it and the value of it. We probably spend a little bit more meeting time and a little bit more practice time than most on special teams, although I can't speak for others. It's not a totally fair statement, but my guess is we attempt to do that."

For a majority of college and professional football teams, second-team or even third-team players make up the bulk of a kickoff, punt return or coverage unit.

Not for Snyder, however, as the 74-year-old is adamant

in being prepared regardless if you're a team captain or a three-year starter.

"If a guy is No. 1 at a position that's somewhat compatible with the special teams unit, we want him on the field," Snyder said. "People say, 'you don't want to wear your guys out,' and a lot of people don't on special teams because your kickoff and kickoff return, your punt coverage, all that requires some significant running. You like to have quickness and speed on there and so does offense and defense. If you have your No. 1s available to play on special teams, you probably enhance your quickness and your speed."

Q-and-A with Alex Byington, beat writer highlights No.5 Auburn

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

Q: The Auburn community was in shambles prior to Gus Malzahn's hiring. What has impressed you most about how he has handled the development of the program on and off the field as head coach?

A: Obviously, Malzahn was aided by the fact that he was Auburn's offensive coordinator from 2009-12, so he already had an in-depth knowledge of the people within the program — including many players he personally recruited — as well as how things were done here on the Plains. So both those proved to be key advantages. But what Malzahn brought was a bigger sense of purpose, as well as a focus and a message to compartmentalize everything by doing the little things to improve on a daily basis. It started with the weight training and conditioning program and carried over into his week-by-week and day-by-day approach.

Q: There are plenty of reasons to like Auburn in this game, but K-State has a history of competing well with larger nonconference



Photo courtesy of Opelika-Auburn News

programs in Manhattan. How will Malzahn have his guys prepared for this out-of-conference road game?

A: Malzahn's approach goes back to focusing on the little things they can control, like

avoiding self-inflicted mistakes, etc. He's also huge on maintaining a strict weekly routine that he believes better prepares his players for such a challenge. Last season's first road game didn't go so well (a 35-21 loss at LSU), but it was also a turning

point for Auburn as the coaches used the setback as a learning tool on what to avoid to be successful. You saw that in their next road game (a 45-41 upset of then-top 10 Texas A&M). Preparation is a key staple of a Malzahn-coached team.

Q: Nick Marshall had clear interest in K-State prior to committing to Auburn. How do you believe he has handled this as he prepares to visit Manhattan as a Tiger?

A: By all accounts, Marshall has tried to downplay the connection for the most part — saying this is just another opportunity to get a win for his team. But how Marshall responds on the field Thursday will be interesting, especially given some undue pressure he's received from fans with regard to his development as a passer.

Q: Tre Mason is gone, but Auburn still carries a strong run game. How has the backfield developed after his departure?

A: Auburn's ground game has picked up right where it left off last season, averaging 330 rushing yards per game after leading the nation a year ago averaging 328 per game. Fellow seniors Cameron Artis-Payne and Corey Grant have filled in nicely for Mason after the latter took over the lead back role with a sensational second-half of the season last year. Artis-Payne seems to have emerged as the every-down option with an added speed and quickness dimension, averaging 144.5 rushing

yards per game so far this season.

Q: Carl Lawson is out with a torn ACL and Dee Ford is a Kansas City Chief. How has Auburn looked with its new pass rush? Name to watch?

A: The pass rush was certainly a concern this offseason, but with the emergence of sophomore defensive tackle Montravius Adams and senior tackle Gabe Wright (both of whom have also split time at end) the Tigers have been able to get to the quarterback more frequently. A key to this game could be how much Auburn's defensive line is able to disrupt K-State quarterback Jake Waters.

Q: How many Auburn fans do you expect to see at Bill Snyder Family Stadium tonight?

A: Being a mid-week game, I can imagine it'll be difficult for many fans, both student and professionals, to travel to Kansas. However, Auburn has a loyal fan base that routinely goes above and beyond for their team, especially in big games like this one. So I wouldn't be surprised to see 5-7,000 Auburn fans sporting their orange and blue tonight.

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Storied success against ranked competition paves way for game against No. 5 Auburn



MASON SWENSON | THE COLLEGIAN

Fans cheer and shake their keys to make noise at the Stephen F. Austin football game on August 30, 2014.



AUSTIN EARL
THE COLLEGIAN

The opportunity that stands in front of K-State could provide the program with its first season-defining win since defeating No. 6 Oklahoma on Sept. 29, 2012.

The program has a history of performing well on the biggest stages and it stretches back to one of its most important wins in November

1998.

The Wildcats were dominating the Cornhuskers on that memorable November evening. They soared through the first nine weeks of the season, only playing one game within 32 points. In week 10, they faced the No. 11 Cornhuskers, who they had not defeated since 1959.

Led by Heisman candidate Michael Bishop, the Wildcats won 40-30. While the team was already in the national spotlight that season, the win planted them firmly in the conversation for the national championship.

In 2002, No. 11 USC visited Manhattan. The Trojans were led by quarterback Carson Palmer, who eventually won the Heisman Trophy.

Just like their big game four years earlier, the Wildcats came out on top. The following week, the team jumped 12 spots in the polls.

In Norman two years ago, a great defensive effort and performance from Collin Klein push the Wildcats from No. 15 in the country to No. 7.

K-State has the chance to add a chapter to the impressive list of wins against top teams. Beating No. 5 Auburn would put the Wildcats in the college football playoff conversation.

The Wildcats have not been perfect and have had their share of blunders, but head coach Bill Snyder's bunch is not commonly known to be unprepared.

Obviously, earning a victory against the fifth ranked team in the nation will be no cakewalk. The Tigers have a dominant rushing attack. They average 330 yards per game on the ground, which is sixth best in the country. Their ground attack is led by a trio of seniors.

Auburn's success isn't just limited to their two games against less-than-stellar teams this season. They averaged 328.3 rushing yards per game last season. They lost their 2013 leading rusher, Tre Mason, but still have a very talented backfield.

Stopping a team this explosive will be a huge challenge for the K-State defense. The Wildcats have had a fair share of criticism

directed to that side of the ball. That criticism is not based in statistics, though. Bill Snyder's squad allows only 87 yards per game on the ground, which is 20th in the nation.

K-State's biggest advantage may be in the passing game. The Tigers allowed their opponents to pass for 258.6 in 2013. Senior Jake Waters is one of the most efficient quarterbacks in the nation and could take advantage of their somewhat porous defense.

Auburn has seemingly improved on defense this season, but they have not played the most challenging opponents in their schedule. If the Wildcats win this game, it will be because Waters

torched their defense.

The opponent is daunting for Snyder's team. They have found a way to win these sorts of games in the coach's career. They have also gotten blown out in situations like this.

With a win, K-State has a chance to do something very special. With a loss, the team can still win the Big 12 but their national significance takes a huge hit. No matter the outcome, Thursday night's contest will define the season for the Wildcats.

Austin Earl is a sophomore is pre-journalism and mass communications. Send all comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com

What They're Saying: writers, analysts, coaches weigh in on K-State vs. Auburn

BY ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

Auburn offensive coordinator Rhett Lashlee

"All I've heard is that Manhattan is the toughest place to play in the Big 12, so we know we've really got to be focused. We've been fortunate not to have any false start penalties in the first two games. Your attention to detail and your awareness really has to be raised when you're on the road in a hostile environment."

"This will be a great test. We've played at home twice. There's a lot of comfort in that. Now we're going on the road, where we're uncomfortable ... it's a great measuring stick to see where we're at and we're going to learn a lot about our team, this year's team, on Thursday."

Auburn head coach Gus Malzahn

"We've still got some new guys and it'll be the first time they've experienced a road test. From a coach's standpoint, you worry about the noise, but the good thing is our center is back, our quarterback is back, so that

will definitely help. It'll be a good test of going on the road because it's one of the tougher places to play in college football, so we'll see what happens."

On Jake Waters...

"He's like another running back. He's very good at running the football, but he's also good at throwing it. The ball comes out of his hand really quick. Especially with the ball on the perimeter, the ball comes out quick. He's a cool customer, you can really tell that on film."

SEC football lead writer Barrett Sallee, Bleacher Report

"Auburn is so efficient with its offense that it almost always forces the game to be played at the pace head coach Gus Malzahn wants it to be played. When you have the opponent playing your game, it's usually 'game over.' The Tigers are playing their brand of football, which will make them tough to beat anywhere. Manhattan included."

National college football lead writer Adam Kramer, Bleacher Report

"There are questions for

K-State, more so than on Auburn's side. The offensive line, for starters, needs work and running back is a work in progress. Even with concerns, excitement should be welcomed and points should come in bunches. If Waters trends up like many believe he will, there's no reason to think this group won't blow by the 33.2 points per game it put up last year."

ESPN college football analyst Danny Kanell talking on the Championship Drive podcast

"When you're not as motivated, when that game is not your priority, which it probably won't be

for Auburn as much as Gus Malzahn will try to preach that all week long. You've got to keep your team focused because K-State, it'll be a hostile environment. Bill Snyder is one of the best coaches in the game and when you look at what it takes to stop Auburn, it takes discipline, it takes sticking to your assignments, it takes a lot of helmets to the football. That's exactly what Snyder teaches at K-State. They will be coached up and will be fundamentally sound and that's what makes it really hard. I still think Auburn wins, but I think it'll be really close and K-State will give them a run for their money."

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ECLECTIC CHARM

Waters, Marshall meet for first time after junior college success



EMILIO RIVERA
THE COLLEGIAN

In the 2012-13, the world saw two programs end their seasons on the opposite ends of the spectrum. Auburn finished with a 3-9 record, including an 0-8 in SEC play. K-State, on the other hand, finished with one of the best records in program history, finishing 11-2 while earning a Fiesta Bowl berth.

However, it wasn't the finish to the season that had the lasting effects on both programs; it was what happened shortly thereafter.

In February of the following year, both programs received signed letters of intent from quarterbacks that were considered to be the best junior-college quarterbacks in the nation.

The two quarterbacks who signed those letters, senior quarterbacks Jake Waters and Nick Marshall, will take the field against each other for the first time tonight.

Waters came out of Iowa Western Community College as the offensive player of the year, and not surprisingly, the first-team All-American selection at quarterback.

Who was the second-team All-American selection at quarterback? Marshall.

What ties these two players together the most was the Wildcats' battle to sign each player

after their junior college careers.

The Wildcats recruited both players heavily, which wasn't a surprise due to the loss of Heisman candidate Collin Klein. Both players brought unique qualities to the table that the Wildcats could have used equally as well.

Waters could throw the ball better than most Wildcat quarterbacks of the past. Marshall, who was one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks available, could have continued the quarterback run success that the Wildcats had relied on through the Snyder era.

Marshall also received something that many players don't get: a compliment of character from Wildcats' head coach Bill Snyder.

Snyder, who is known for holding a player's character and integrity on and off the field in high-regard, thought highly of Marshall.

"Just watching him play (in junior college), (he is) a talented young guy, he could do everything that we talked about," Snyder said. "I enjoyed meeting him, he was a good young person and I liked him as an individual."

Snyder, knowing what kind of player that Marshall is because of the tape that he saw during the recruiting process and the plays that he has continued to make for the Tigers, knows exactly what to expect when the Auburn quarterback comes into town.

"He's a talented young guy and he can do both throw it and run it, his numbers indicate exactly that," Snyder said. "They say (the Tigers are) a team that likes to run the football, it's their first emphasis, but they'll throw the ball. They'll try to cast it



KENNY MOSS | THE AUBURN PLAINSMAN

Quarterback **Nick Marshall** runs outside the pocket against San Jose State on Sept. 6, 2014.

downfield, and he has an ability to do that; he has a strong arm. (The fans) will see him running the ball and see him throwing it."

Being in the same level of football as Marshall for the last three years, Waters is familiar with Marshall.

"I knew of him because of JUCO (football)," Waters said. "I knew what kind of player he

was, and I kind of knew he was getting recruited by K-State. I wasn't quite sure about all of (the recruiting plans), I was kind of just focused on myself and the process for me, trying to make the best decision for me."

Waters has become a good example of the hard-nosed player that Snyder is known for having. He is more of a leader

for the Wildcats and is refining his abilities as a runner and a passer.

Marshall took a team that was down in the dumps before he arrived and took them to last season's national championship game. He has developed into a quarterback that can beat teams in multiple ways.

In a strange twist to Mar-

shall's story, he will undoubtedly get a feel of what could have been when he steps under the lights of Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

Emilio Rivera is a sophomore in pre-journalism and mass communications. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com

Games to Watch: Oklahoma, West Virginia continue conference slate

By EMILIO RIVERA
THE COLLEGIAN

Big 12



No. 4 Oklahoma (3-0) at West Virginia (2-1), Saturday, 6:30 p.m., FOX (Line: Oklahoma -8)

The Sooners are a perfect 2-0 against the Mountaineers since joining the conference in 2012.

Coming off of a dominating win 34-10 win over Tennessee (2-1), the Sooners are looking to start off their conference schedule with a win in one of the hardest stadiums to play in the country: Milan Puskar Stadium. The last time the Sooners traveled to Morgantown, they found themselves in a shootout – narrowly defeating the Mountaineers 50-49.

While the 2014-15 Sooners may not need a last-minute score to win this time around, they will need to avoid an upset against a West Virginia team that has trended upwards since its hard-fought loss against Alabama.

Around the nation



Central Michigan (2-1) at Kansas (1-1), Saturday, 2:30 p.m., FSN (Line: Kansas -3)

With both teams coming off embarrassing losses to ACC teams, both look to resurrect their winning ways in week four. The Jayhawks, who have now split their season opening games for the third straight season, seemed shell-shocked against the Blue Devils (3-1).

Sophomore quarterback Montell Cozart looked dreadful, throwing for only 89 yards while tossing two interceptions to the Blue Devils' defense. The Kansas offense will need Cozart to refine his passing game if it wants to resurrect its lost football team.

Freshman running back Corey Avery has started his career on a good note, rushing for 178 yards on 35 carries and one touchdown. The Jayhawks' defense needs to tighten up as it allowed 331 rushing yards in last Saturday's game.



Florida (2-0, 1-0) at No. 3 Alabama (3-0), Saturday, 2:30 p.m., CBS (Line: Alabama -15)

In a game that could validate the Gators and break the Crimson Tide's season, Florida will need some help if they have a chance of going into Tuscaloosa and pulling off a win.

In a notably bad performance, the Gators needed three overtimes to beat Kentucky (2-1) at home. To pull the upset, they will need to have a better performance from their defense, which allowed 369 passing yards to the Wildcats.

Alabama's last loss to the Gators came in the SEC championship game in 2008. If the Gators plan on pulling out the victory, they'll need to score on a defense that has only given up 35 points through the first three games combined. If the Crimson Tide repeat their performance from week one against West Virginia, they stand a chance of losing at home against the Gators for the first time since 1998.



Mississippi State (3-0) at No. 10 LSU (3-0), Saturday, 6 p.m., ESPN (Line: LSU -10)

The Bulldogs, coming off a 35-3 win against South Alabama, face a team that is one of the best in the country in their home stadium.

Mississippi State will look to turn the tides against the Tigers, who have won 14 straight against the boys from Starkville, Mississippi. They also haven't won in Baton Rouge since 1991.

The easiest way for the Tigers to win the game is to rely on their duo of sophomore quarterback Anthony Jennings and senior running back Kenny Hilliard. Jennings and Hilliard have combined to account for 842 all-purpose yards for the Tigers.

The Bulldogs will have to rely on quarterback Dak Prescott to continue to perform at a high level. The junior is the driving force behind his team and in being a dual-threat quarterback, he can create opportunities for his team and possibly guide Mississippi State to an upset.



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

Oklahoma running back **Roy Finch** flies through the air as K-State defenders attempt to tackle him during the second quarter of the Wildcats' 41-31 loss to the Sooners on senior day Saturday. The following play, running back Brennan Clay ran 64 yards for a touchdown.



Miami (FL) (2-1, 0-1) at No. 24 Nebraska (3-0, 2-0), Saturday, 7 p.m., ESPN2 (Line: Nebraska -7)

In their first game of the season, the Hurricanes lost to a very talented Louisville squad (2-1). Now, they look to travel

into yet another hostile environment. Nebraska will look to its impressive home-field advantage to aid itself to its first 4-0 record since 2011. That was also their first season in the Big 10.

The Cornhuskers will look to bounce back from their near loss vs. McNeese State on Sept. 6. They'll need a more consistent performance from senior Ameer Abdullah to erase the possibility.



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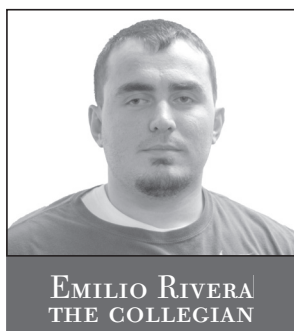
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Power Rankings: Petty holds firm grip on the top spot



No. 1: Baylor QB Bryce Petty (Last week: 1)

Even though Petty was out with a back injury for the Bears' second game, he still managed to throw for 577 yards and six touchdowns against two FBS opponents total this season. Petty's leadership and knowledge of the game make him one of the most lethal passers in the nation.

Petty has diced up opponents for his entire starting career and is looking like Baylor's second Heisman candidate in the last three years if he continues on his current pace.

No. 2: K-State QB Jake Waters (Last week: 2)

After a bye week during week three, Waters will look to perform in a big way against Auburn. The game is very likely the biggest that the senior has played in during his stay in Manhattan.

Waters has transformed his game over his first two outings. He has managed to keep growing in his passing game, throwing for 462 yards in only two games.

The most improved aspect of Waters' game is his ability to scramble and make yards when there seems to be none available. With 193 rushing yards so far, Waters leads the conference with 96.5 rushing yards per game.

No. 3: Oklahoma QB Trevor Knight (Last week: 3)

Going into 2014-15, Knight was



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

Baylor quarterback **Bryce Petty** and running back **Lache Seastrunk** race after a high snap on Oct. 12, 2013 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

overlooked by most people for being an elite Big 12 quarterback. With three games under his belt this season, Knight has already thrown for 860 yards.

Knight has had plenty of help from his young running back corps and because of his ability to pass the ball at a high level, there has been more open space for his running backs to get to the second and third level of the defense. Watch for Knight to continue his success against West Virginia.

No. 4: Baylor WR KD Cannon (Last week: NR)

Coming out of high school as a highly touted target, Cannon has shown elite capability as the main target in the high-powered Bears offense. Accounting for 471 receiving yards and five touchdowns through the air, Cannon is a match-up nightmare for teams who have to plan around all of the other Bears' stars.

Averaging 157 receiving yards per game, Cannon leads the Big 12 in receiving yards per contest. Cannon also leads the conference in all-purpose yards, averaging 158.3 yards.

If Cannon keeps his receiving num-

bers high, which will start being a challenge when the Bears begin to play teams with decent defenses, he will continue to climb the list of the best offensive players in the conference.

No. 5: K-State WR Tyler Lockett (Last week: 4)

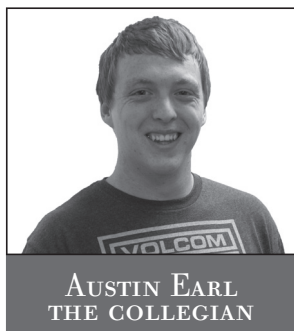
Lockett stays in the top five with his ability to make elite-caliber plays. In his last outing, the senior had six receptions for 136 yards. His playmaking ability was one of the reasons that the Wildcats came back to win at Iowa State on Sept. 6.

His speed allows him to beat defenders off the ball and down the field to get open. He also has enough control over his body and hands to reel in most balls thrown his way.

The Wildcats will need Lockett to continue the production he showed against the Cyclones in order to beat Auburn tonight.

Emilio Rivera is a sophomore in pre-journalism and mass communications. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com

Power Rankings: New players in four spots



No. 1: Texas DT Malcom Brown (Last week: unranked)

Brown leads the Big 12 with 3.5 sacks through three weeks of play. He has also racked up seven tackles for loss. He has been an absolutely disruptive force.

The Longhorns (1-2) have endured some struggles so far this season, but Brown has had no part in that. His team needs him to continue to produce if they are going to sustain any level of success. As it has been told many times before, a dominant pass rusher can cover up a lot of holes in a defense.

No. 2: TCU LB Paul Dawson (Last week: unranked)

Dawson has been all over the field for the Horned Frogs in their two games. He averages 9.8 tackles per game, which is first in the league. His four tackles for loss rank him second in the conference.

Not only does Dawson provide help in the run game, but he's created takeaways for his team as well. He has recovered two fumbles, forced a fumble and intercepted one pass. Behind

his stellar early-season play, TCU is ranked second in the Big 12 in take-aways.

No. 3: Iowa State DL Cory Morrissey (Last week: unranked)

Morrissey has been almost as disruptive as the players ahead of him in these rankings. He is second in the conference in sacks and fourth in tackles for loss. He has four sacks which includes two against in-state rival Iowa. Morrissey's defensive effort in the Cyclones' 20-17 win over the Hawkeyes helped lead them to their first victory of the year.

Iowa State's run defense has strug-

gled this season, ranking eighth in the Big 12. Morrissey, who has 12 tackles in the Cyclones' three games, must get better in that part of the game if he wants to become an elite player.

No. 4: Kansas LB Ben Heeney (Last week: unranked)

Heeney leads the Big 12 in tackles per game. He is not flashy, but he is a sure as they come in tackling. Heeney proved that he is a good player in 2013-14 and he continues to build on his track record. He had 15 tackles against Duke on Saturday.

Without Heeney, no one can predict how bad Kansas' defense would really be. They already allow the second-most yards per game in the conference. Heeney must play at the top of his game in order for the Jayhawks to have a chance at stopping their opponents.

No. 5: TCU S Sam Carter (Last week: 5)

Sam Carter is still holding on strong to a spot in the power rankings. He had four tackles and an interception against Minnesota. The TCU defense was fierce, allowing the Golden Gophers to pass for just 169 yards.

Carter is the leader of the Horned Frogs' secondary, who has allowed the fewest passing yards per game in the Big 12 this season. Between Carter and his teammates, moving the ball through the air against this defense is a daunting task.



KELBY WINGERT | IOWA STATE DAILY

Senior defensive end **Cory Morrissey** during the game against North Dakota State on Aug. 30 at Jack Trice Stadium. The Cyclones fell to the Bison 14-34.

Austin Earl is a sophomore in mass communications. Please send all comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

By the Numbers

3

Games played between K-State and Auburn

The Wildcats and Tigers have not faced each other much in the universities' histories. The teams had one home-and-home series in 1978 and 1979. They met again in 2007 at Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, Alabama, but the Wildcats lost 23-13. K-State lost the first two games as well.

8

Years since K-State beat a top-five ranked team

On Nov. 11, 2006, a Wildcat squad led by former head coach Ron Prince pulled off an unlikely victory over No. 4 Texas. They have only had three chances to perform the same feat since that win. The Wildcats will have their fourth chance in eight years when they face Auburn tonight.

45.8

Average net punting yards by Auburn on each attempt

While this stat seems trivial, there is something to be said about a team that can completely change field position with one kick. If Auburn goes three-and-out, its punting game can help out its defense. The Tigers' net punting average is third best in the nation.

55.9

Percent of the game that K-State has possession of the ball

Time of possession could be very important for K-State against a fast-paced offense like Auburn. The Wildcats have averaged 33:55 on offense in each of their two games this season. That ranks 11th in the nation.

67.9

Percent of the time Auburn converts on third down

Stopping the Tigers on third down has been a major problem for their opponents. Auburn has faced 28 third-downs this season and has converted on 19 of them. That conversion rate is the best in the nation. K-State's defense ranks 38th in the country in stopping teams on third down. They allow their opponents to convert 33.3 percent of the time.

100

Percent of the time Auburn and K-State have scored when in the red zone

Fans can go ahead and chalk-up points when either of these teams get past the 20-yard line. K-State has 12 attempts with 10 touchdowns and two field goals. Auburn has 11 attempts with 10 touchdowns and a field goal.

330

Yards per game Auburn has rushed for this season

The Tigers' ground attack is deadly. Senior running backs Cameron Artis-Payne and Corey Grant provide a deadly one-two punch. The duo has combined for 465 yards and five touchdowns so far this season. Senior quarterback Nick Marshall also excels when he carries the ball. He has ran for 122 yards and two touchdowns in the team's two games. K-State has the 20th best run defense in the country, allowing 87 yards per game.

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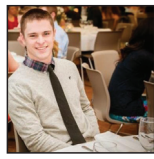
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Our football writers and celebrity guests make their picks

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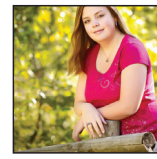
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